

# Lecture on the salvage of His Majesty's Sloop DeBraak to take place at Lewes, Del.'s Zwaanendael Museum on Jan. 17, 2015

**-Listing of museum events through May 2015 also included-**

(DOVER, Del.—Jan. 5, 2015)—On Saturday, Jan. 17, 2015 at 2 p.m., the Zwaanendael Museum, located at 102 Kings Highway in Lewes, Del., will present a lecture on the salvage of His Majesty's Sloop DeBraak presented by Claudia Leister, executive director of the Milford Museum. The program is the 1980s chapter of "Delaware Decades," an eight-part series of lectures exploring successive decades in Delaware's history from the 1930s to the 2000s. Admission to the event is free and open to the public but, due to space restrictions, reservations are required by calling the museum at 302-645-1148 no later than Jan. 16, 2015.



Artistic rendition of the capsizing of the DeBraak by Peggy Kane, 1990.

DeBraak was a British sloop of war that was escorting and protecting a convoy of British and American merchant ships en route to the United States when it was capsized and lost off the Delaware coast on May 25, 1798. The ship was raised, and badly damaged, during a commercial salvage operation in 1986. The remaining section of the ship's hull and associated artifact collection have been curated by the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs since they were acquired by state of Delaware in 1992.

Claudia Leister has served as executive director of the [Milford Museum](#) since retiring as the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs' curator of collections management in June 2011. She began her 34-year career with the division in March 1977 as a volunteer at the Island Field Museum. The following month, she was hired as a casual/seasonal supervisor for a summer archaeological team followed by work as an archaeological assistant. In 1980, she began full-time employment as the division's registrar (later renamed curator of registration, then curator of collections management). Beginning in 1986, she was deeply involved in the processing, cataloging and curating of artifacts from the DeBraak shipwreck. She holds a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in archaeology/anthropology from Michigan State University, and a master's degree in history from the University of Delaware.



Claudia Leister

The [Zwaanendael Museum](#) was built in 1931 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the state's first European colony, Swanendael, established by the Dutch along Hoorn Kill (present-day Lewes-Rehoboth Canal) in 1631. Designed by E. William Martin (architect of Legislative Hall and the Hall of Records in Dover), the museum is modeled after the town hall in Hoorn, the Netherlands, and features a stepped-facade gable with carved stonework and decorated shutters.



Zwaanendael Museum

Following is a schedule of Zwaanendael-Museum-sponsored events through May 2015. Unless otherwise noted, all programs take place at the Zwaanendael Museum located at 102 Kings Highway in Lewes, Del. Museum hours from Nov. 1 to March 31 are Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. From April 1

to Oct. 31, museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and Sunday, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free for all events listed. For additional information, call 302-645-1148.

### **Zwaanendael Museum exhibits and displays**

**Note:** Recent program changes are highlighted in brown.

#### **Ongoing**

**[“Delaware and the War of 1812.”](#)** Exhibit examines the service and sacrifice of Delawareans of 1812 to 1815, and the important role that the state played in a conflict that helped shaped the development of the United States.

#### **Ongoing**

**[“A Seaborne Citizenry: The DeBraak and Its Atlantic World.”](#)** Exhibit utilizes artifacts recovered from His Majesty’s Sloop of War DeBraak, a British warship that sank off the Delaware coast on May 25, 1798 to tell the story of the vessel, its crew and the historical context within which it operated in the Atlantic World of the late 18th century.

#### **Thru April 12, 2015 Ongoing**

**[“Simple Pleasures: Play and Dance.”](#)** Display of original Edwardian and roaring-20s fashions that reflect the spirit of the liberated “modern” woman as depicted in the “Downton Abbey” television series. From the collections of the state of Delaware. **Note change in closing date.**

### **Zwaanendael Museum upcoming special events**

**Note:** Recent program changes are highlighted in brown.

#### **Saturday, Jan. 17, 2015**

**“Delaware’s Decades—the 1980s: ‘Salvage of His Majesty’s Sloop DeBraak.’ ”** Lecture by Claudia Leister, executive director of the Milford Museum. Part six of an eight-part series exploring decades in Delaware’s history. 2 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are

required by calling 302-645-1148 no later than Jan. 5 16, 2015. **Note change in reservations deadline.**

### **Saturday, Feb. 14, 2015**

**"Delaware's Decades—the 1990s."** ~~Program description TBA.~~ Don Voltz, executive director of the [Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame](#), will discuss the planning and creation of the museum and its inductees. Part seven of an eight-part series exploring decades in Delaware's history. 2 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are required by calling 302-645-1148 no later than Feb.2, 2015. **Note updated program information.**

### **Saturday, March 14, 2015**

**Delaware's Decades—the 2000s.** Lecture by Bill Ayrey, lab manager and company historian from [ILC Dover](#), who will discuss the future of space travel and space suits from the early 2000s to the present. Eighth and final installment of a series exploring decades in Delaware's history. 2 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are required by calling 302-645-1148 no later than March 2, 2015.

### **Thursday–Saturday, April 9–11, 2015**

**[Lewes Tulip Celebration](#).** City-wide series of activities celebrating Lewes' Dutch heritage including Dutch games, crafts and a display of Delftware ceramics at the Zwaanendael Museum. Sponsored by the [Lewes Chamber of Commerce](#). Downtown Lewes. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. 302-645-8073.

### **Saturday, April 18, 2015**

**Dutch-American Friendship Day.** Discover Delaware's Dutch roots and learn how that connection is alive today. 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

### **Saturday, April 25, 2015**

**King's Day.** Celebration of the birthday of King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands in a program that will also

explore royal titles and Delaware's Dutch connection. 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Saturday, May 23, 2015**

**Fourth Annual Zwaanendael Maritime Festival: "A Sailor's Life for Me."** Maritime-themed activities, games, displays by local organizations and more. 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

**-End-**

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